

SPIT FIRE

(EXCERPT: THE FIRST 6 PAGES)

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EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK, WANDSWORTH - DAY

A large, grubby apartment block stands adjacent to a bustling main road that heaves with mid-morning traffic.

On the opposite side of the block, a patchwork of ex-council housing estates sprawls out into the visible distance.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

WILL BOOTH, 54, hunches over his dining table, meticulously building an Airfix-style model of a WW2 fighter plane.

He draws a strip of glue across a long piece, picks up another and squeezes them together, forming a wing.

On one wall hangs a framed photograph of England cricketer Ian Botham, mounted above a signed cricket bat.

Suddenly distracted, Will turns to face the front door.

INT. STAIRWELL, WILL'S FLOOR, APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY

Middle-class hipster MATTHEW PIERCE, 36, and his burly friend, OSCAR, carry a small sofa up the narrow staircase that separates Will's floor from the one above.

Matthew struggles to keep his side of the sofa raised, but idle Oscar lets his side SCRAPE and BANG against the stairs.

MATTHEW

Seriously? You call that lifting?

OSCAR

What? It's heavy.

MATTHEW

(sarcastic)

You live in the gym.

Will steps out of his front door and stands like a sentinel, glaring at the young men with accusing eyes.

Matthew sees Will, sets the sofa down and waves with a smile.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(to Will)

Hello neighbour. I'm Matthew. Just moving in.

Will remains silent, looking annoyed and unimpressed.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Looks like I'll be right above your place. That's Oscar. Helping me move.

OSCAR

(Acknowledging Will)  
Morning.

Will's eyes flash over to Oscar, then back to Matthew.

MATTHEW

So listen, I'm having a party tonight, yeah? Housewarming. You should come. Bring friends.

Will says nothing as he turns around to go back inside.

Matthew and Oscar give each other a baffled look.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Will sits at his table, sulking with arms folded, as the sound of DRAGGING FURNITURE rumbles across his ceiling.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MATTHEW'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Oscar is DRAGGING a heavy coffee table across the living room's wooden floor towards one end of the room.

Matthew enters from the kitchen looking perplexed.

MATTHEW

Dude. It's a coffee table. In the middle, by the sofa.

Oscar shrugs, looking fed up with the whole endeavour.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WILL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Will sighs with relief at the apartment's sudden silence.

He picks up his model plane and continues building.

The DRAGGING noise resumes, so Will immediately sets down the plane, leaves the table and heads straight to the front door.

Will's front door SLAMS off-screen.

INT. THE BENSON'S FRONT DOOR, STAIRWELL, APARTMENT BLOCK -  
DAY

The front DOORBELL rings and MRS BENSON, 75, opens up to find Will on the doorstep, clutching a bag of groceries.

WILL

Alright Mrs B? I brought the usual.

Mrs Benson grimaces, a common expression for her.

MRS BENSON

Saw that posh lad moving in. Looks a right nonce.

Will waits, gawking, while Mrs Benson shuffles back inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM, BENSON APARTMENT - DAY

MR BENSON, 80, slouches in his dilapidated armchair, scraping dirt from his toenails with a butter knife.

Will sits on the Benson's couch with the Benson's ageing DOG slumped over his feet.

MR BENSON

It's the moral principle. There's struggling young families could be in there, not some yuppie dandy.

Mrs Benson enters from the kitchen, with a cup of tea on a mismatched saucer.

MRS BENSON

I've nothing against him, as long as he keeps himself to himself.

Mrs Benson hands the cup of tea over to Will.

MR BENSON

You know what this is?  
Gentrification. He's probably one of them workshy, silver spoon -

MRS BENSON

(interrupting)  
Don't talk bollocks. If he's buying property, he's working. Silly sod.

Mrs Benson shuffles back toward the kitchen.

MR BENSON

(to Will)

You've clocked him, Will. What do you reckon?

Will looks blank while he tries to think about it.

WILL

Well. He does make a lot of noise.

MR BENSON

That's what I thought. No bloody respect.

Will looks down and sees the dog, chewing its own crotch.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK, WANDSWORTH - NIGHT

Lights are on in about half the apartments as PARTY MUSIC echoes around the block.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MATTHEW'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The PARTY MUSIC is coming from Matthew's stereo. The apartment is now furnished, and around TWENTY PARTY-GOERS are mingling, flirting, smoking and drinking.

Oscar is sat on the crowded sofa, chatting intimately with his girlfriend, MELINDA.

Several party-goers give a cry of APPLAUSE as Matthew enters from the kitchen carrying a tray of homemade cocktails.

INT. BATHROOM, WILL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Will sulks in a steaming-hot bubble bath, staring up at the ceiling as the PARTY MUSIC reverberates through the bathroom.

A mug of tea perches on the edge of the bath, the surface of the liquid rippling to the rhythm of the music.

Will sighs and sinks lower into the hot water.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MATTHEW'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Melinda beckons Oscar up from the couch, smiling and waving her hips, ready to boogie.

OSCAR  
(to Matthew)  
Matthew. Melinda wants to dance.

Matthew pulls his phone out of his pocket and taps the screen.

The screen reads: 'NETBEATZ MUSIC PLAYER.' He taps again and swipes through his music collection, landing on an eye-catching album cover.

A distinctive BASS-HEAVY TUNE booms through the stereo.

Matthew increases the volume as the party-goers WHOOP their approval and begin dancing.

INT. BATHROOM, WILL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Will's face floods with rage as the BASS-HEAVY TUNE causes the whole bathroom to shake.

His mug of tea buzzes and slides toward the edge of the bath.

A crack appears in the ceiling.

Will's mug tips over the edge of the bath and SMASHES on the floor, exploding into a pile of wet ceramic shards.

Will leaps out the bath, stamps on the shards, falls forward, and THUMPS his head on the floor.

INT. MATTHEW'S FRONT DOOR, STAIRWELL, APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Will, off-screen, THUMPS Matthew's front door with his fist.

Melinda opens the door and immediately recoils, then SHRIEKS with laughter and retreats back inside.

Matthew comes to the door and his eyes widen with surprise.

MATTHEW  
Wow, man. You look ready to party.

Will is revealed, furious and dripping wet, wearing a threadbare '70s kimono that only just covers his testicles.

WILL  
You having a laugh with that noise?

MATTHEW  
No, we're having a housewarming.

Blood begins to run down Will's face, from the spot where he hit his head on the bathroom floor.

WILL

You're breaking my cups.

MATTHEW

Oh shit. Sorry. Listen, why don't you join us?

Will grabs Matthew's shirt and pushes him into the doorway, pinning Matthew against the open door.

WILL

You worthless toe rag. You've got no bloody respect.

Oscar advances to the door, using his size to shove Will through the doorway and back out into the stairwell.

Matthew stays back, panting, while Oscar confronts Will.

Oscar approaches Will and points a finger into his chest.

OSCAR

(To Will)

You touch him, your head goes up your arse. Got that?

Will squares up to Oscar, but Oscar's a head taller.

Oscar glares back and waits.

Will turns around and hobbles toward the stairs.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

That's it. Piss off.

As he departs, Will touches the wound on his head and finds blood on his fingers.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A model of HMS Belfast buzzes on top of the mantle piece as Matthew's PARTY MUSIC plays on, booming through the ceiling.

Will broods on the sofa, wearing his kimono and a large pair of ear defenders as he swigs from a bottle of gin.

He stares into space, in a state of alcoholic oblivion.